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TALES
FROM
CATLAND.

TALES
FROM
CATLAND.

TALES FROM CATLAND,

FOR

LITTLE KITTENS.

BY

AN OLD TABBY.

[illegible] Tabitha Grimalkin, pseud.

With Engravings from Designs by Billings.

BOSTON:
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TO THE

KITTENS OF ENGLAND,

THE FOLLOWING PAGES

ARE VERY AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED,

BY THEIR

SINCERE FRIEND AND WELL-WISHER,

Tabitha Grimalkin.

TALES FROM CATLAND.

THE THREE CATS.

MANY hundred years ago, in the good old times of the fairies, there lived a young princess in a very grand palace. Its walls were of the purest white marble, the doors were of orange-wood, the window-frames were of gold, and the furniture of the rooms was of the most costly description. The princess's drawing-room was hung with beautiful tapestry, the curtains were of the richest crimson silk, all over golden flowers, the mirrors reached from the floor to the ceiling, and the chairs were of ebony inlaid with precious stones. And the princess had two hundred and four best gowns, some

of cloth of gold, some of silver tissue; besides a great many others, nearly as good, that she wore every day.

But my story has not so much to do with the princess, as with her *cats*, for she had two; an elderly one, called Glumdalkin, and a very frolicsome young one whose name was Friskarina. Glumdalkin was, somehow or other, second cousin once removed to Friskarina, but years older; and, to say the truth, Friskarina was not very fond of her: however, in consideration of her age and relationship, she behaved on the whole very civilly and respectfully to her. They were so very different. And there was not the least family likeness, either, in their persons. Glumdalkin was jet black, had an uncommonly cross pair of green eyes, that seemed always on the look-out for something going wrong, was very fat, and moved as if it was too much trouble to her to walk across the room; while Friskarina's coat was of the richest tortoise-shell, and though she was quite plump, and as

sleek as satin, yet there was not a more lively little creature in all Catland; it quite did one good to see her jumping over the foot-stools in the princess's drawing-room. She had a prodigious longing, sometimes, to jump over cousin Glum's great broad back, as she sat before the fire; but she knew *that* would never do, so she was prudent, and contented herself with scampering over the furniture; while Glumdalkin, pretending to be sound asleep all the time, would be watching her with one eye open the least bit in the world, and secretly wishing that Friskarina might be unlucky enough to dash down one of the princess's old china jars that stood under the table.

It was a cold winter's evening—*very* cold—and the pages had drawn the thick crimson curtains in the drawing-room, and the fire had been mended, and was piled high up, blazing and crackling; the candles were lighted, and Glumdalkin's velvet cushion had been placed ready for her in front of the fire, and she was slowly crawling

towards it, that she might stretch herself out at full length, and digest the wing of a boiled fowl that she had just been dining upon. The princess was lying on the sofa by the side of the fire, apparently fast asleep. But she was not asleep; and, moreover, she was watching Glumdalkin, who had settled herself very comfortably on her cushion, while Friskarina, looking much graver than usual, was sitting with her shoulders drawn up to her ears, in quite an old cattish attitude, and her bright shining eyes fixed thoughtfully on the fire.

Now you must know that the princess had an old aunt who was a fairy; and she had bestowed upon her niece the faculty of understanding the language of animals; a very amusing gift it was, and the princess often derived great diversion from it. On the present occasion, as she lay on her sofa after dinner, she thought it would be very good entertainment to hear what Glumdalkin and Friskarina might be talking about.

But some time passed before either said anything; at last, Glumdalkin gave a great yawn, and flapping her tail rather angrily against the cushion, remarked:

'Really, Friskarina, you are dreadfully stupid, to-night; you make noise enough when I want to go to sleep: but now, when I am inclined for a little rational conversation, you sit there as mum and sulky as an old bear.'

Friskarina was used to polite observations from her second cousin once removed, so she very quietly answered that she thought Glumdalkin had been going to take a nap, and that she did not wish to disturb her.

'Well, I do admire that!' exclaimed Glumdalkin; 'you are wonderfully considerate, all at once; now, *I* think, Miss Friskarina, you have been getting into mischief, and that's the reason you sit so quiet there. I should like to know where you were all this morning, when the pages were running all over the house after you, because the princess wanted you, and nobody could find

you? Well, people have strange tastes! I should have thought she would have found the company of a grave, decorous cat, like myself, who knows the ways of the court, and has seen something of society, a great deal more agreeable than that of such a ridiculous, light-headed thing as you are: I declare you make me quite nervous very often, you jump about so! But she never sent for *me;* so of course I could not go to her. The world's very unlike what it was when I was young — very unlike indeed!' and, giving an odd kind of grunt in her throat, Glumdalkin curled herself round on the other side, as if in a sort of despair at the wickedness of the world.

Friskarina thought she had not much to complain of, but she did not venture to say it; so she answered, quite good-naturedly:

'I am very sorry, cousin Glumdalkin, that I was out when the princess called for me, but *indeed* I was in no mischief; I was seeing such strange sights, it has made me quite unhappy ever since I came back.'

'Humph!' said Glumdalkin, 'and pray what wonderful things have you been seeing?'

'Why,' replied Friskarina, 'I got uncommonly tired this morning of the palace garden, I know every stick and stone in it so well. I had been racing nine times round the gravel walk, and had got half way round to make up ten, when, luckily, I saw that the gardener had left the outer door ajar; so I thought I might as well take the opportunity of seeing what there was on the other side of the wall; accordingly I peeped out and found that I was in a kind of road, with some such odd looking things, here and there, I don't know what to call them, but I fancy people live in them, for I saw some persons going into one of them. They were not in the least like this house that the princess lives in; I am sure Grandmagnificolowsky, the tall page, could never have stood upright in any one of them — and so black and dismal and dirty they looked!'

'And you went into one of the nasty places, of course?' growled Glumdalkin; '*cottages*, child, they are called.'

'You shall hear all, in good time,' answered Friskarina; 'I was peeping about, outside our garden door, rather afraid to venture further, when I saw *such* a cat come out of one of these cottages, as you call them — O Glumdalkin! it really would have made your heart ache to have seen her. I had no idea there were such cats in the world. It was dreadful to look at her; she was so horribly thin, you might have counted her bones, and as dirty as if she had lived all her life in a coal-hole: she crawled out of the door as if she had hardly strength to walk, and *such* a thin tail she had; it made me shudder to look at her. I couldn't help going up and asking her what was the matter with her ——'

'What!' interrupted Glumdalkin, rousing herself up, her eyes flashing fire, and her whiskers standing on end, 'do you mean to say, that *you* — a cat descended from such

an honorable, and distinguished family as ours — one of the most ancient in Catland — that you actually demeaned yourself so far as to enter into conversation with a filthy, beggarly wretch, crawling out of a miserable cottage? Friskarina, on the honor of a cat, I am ashamed of you.'

'I certainly *did* enter into conversation with her,' replied Friskarina, plucking up a little spirit; 'for I asked her where she lived, and why she was so thin and dirty.'

'I wonder,' said Glumdalkin, 'how you could bear to go near her.'

'But, one couldn't help it, you know,' said Friskarina, 'when she looked so very wretched. Poor thing! when I asked her how it was she was so thin, the tears came into her eyes, and she said, she had so very little to eat. I asked her if her mistress never gave her any cream? and — would you believe it? — she actually asked me what cream was.'

'Why, you simple child,' said Glumdalkin, 'do you suppose *cottage* cats ever taste such

a thing? They think themselves lucky if they can get a drop of skimmed milk now and then——' (Some people suspected, but this is *quite* between ourselves, that Glumdalkin, though she boasted that she had never been outside the walls of the palace garden in her life, knew more about the ways of cats in humble stations than she chose to confess — her father, it was said, had married sadly beneath his family.)

'I don't believe,' continued Friskarina, 'that *that* poor cat ever gets even skimmed milk; for she told me her mistress could not get enough to eat herself, and that she hardly ever gave *her* anything at all; so that all she lives upon is a chance mouse, when she can catch it, or the black beetles she finds on the floor at night. And when she is thirsty, she goes to a gutter that runs by the side of the road, and laps a little muddy water. Only fancy what a dreadful life to lead. I had no notion that there was a cat in the world so badly off. I really

could not eat my dinner to-day, for thinking about it. It seems so sad, to have all these nice things, all the great saucers of cream that we have for breakfast, and these soft cushions to sleep upon, and then to think of that poor cat, so near us, catching black beetles (nasty things!) for her supper, and lapping out of the dirty gutter; it makes me quite wretched.'

'Friskarina;' said Glumdalkin, rising from her velvet cushion, with a great deal of majesty in her air, and curling her tail very solemnly round her toes — 'Friskarina, let us have no more of this nonsense, if you please! I consider your behavior this morning, and your conversation at present, utterly beneath the dignity of a cat of condition. Remember the distinguished family from which you have sprung, and that you have the honor to belong to the household of the princess — so, pray, let me hear no more of making acquaintances among the vulgar cats of the village; you will be a disgrace to the court!'

Friskarina shrugged her shoulders, and replied, in rather an under-tone, 'that she really did not see anything *disgraceful* in being sorry for the unfortunate ——' to which Glumdalkin made no answer. She seemed to be seized with a violent fit of cleanliness, and began washing and biting her right paw with extraordinary vehemence.

Just then, the entrance of Grandmagnificolowsky, and three or four more of the pages, with the princess's supper, put an end to the conversation. A fine gold dish, containing several dainty morsels, which the princess had carved with her own royal hands, was put down upon the velvet cushion, and Glumdalkin did them full justice.

When supper was over, two of the maids of honor carried the two cats to their beds, where we will leave them for the night, in pretty little baskets lined with yellow satin, and made so delightfully soft and warm, that it almost made one go to sleep only to look at them. Nevertheless, Friskarina lay awake a whole quarter of an hour, turning

over a plan in her little head, that she meant to try and bring to pass the next day, if possible.

Glumdalkin was fast asleep in a minute. What was the princess doing? She was lying in her splendid bed, thinking and watching the fire-light dancing upon the spangles of her curtains, for her bed was so beautiful — so very beautiful! It was made all of silver, in the shape of a nautilus shell; and the curtains were of pale blue satin, embroidered with silver flowers: you never saw such a lovely bed as it was! And the longer the princess watched the light flashing so merrily upon all the fine things in the room, the more she thought; and the more she thought, the more unhappy she grew, but what she thought about I can't tell you; perhaps we shall guess by and bye: I dare say she dropped asleep at last.

During the night there was a heavy fall of snow. When the princess came down to breakfast, the grass was covered with a sheet of pure white — the trees quivered beneath

the snow that covered their boughs — the shrubs in the garden looked like a fairy-wood of frosted silver glittering in the cold, bright sun — and far, far away, many miles distant, rose high mountains, white and dreary, with pine forests nodding on their summits. It was very — very cold.

Now there were few things Friskarina liked better than a gambol in the snow; so, as soon as she had finished her breakfast, and had warmed herself well at the fire, off she set, full drive, into the garden, pattering hither and thither, that she might have the pleasure of making as many footmarks as possible, and jumping up at the flakes that came tumbling down from the laurel-leaves. Never was there such a merry little cat! At last the thought struck her — the poor cottage cat — did she like the snow, too? and Friskarina longed to know whether she could come out that morning: perhaps she meant to sit by the fire all day. By degrees, Friskarina recollected that she went to sleep the night before with a plan in her head. So

she ran down the lawn towards the garden door, hoping to find it again open. Alas! the ill-natured gardener had shut it quite fast. However, Friskarina was not easily daunted; a cat of genius is never without resources. She turned her eyes towards a thick trailing of ivy that grew up the wall, and she began to wonder whether cousin Glumdalkin would be likely to spy her out if she climbed up the ivy-tree, and so got over the wall that way. She considered, however, that on such a morning as that, Glumdalkin would be sure to be on the hearth-rug, with her nose as close to the fender as possible, not troubling her head in the least about the world out of doors.

So, making a vigorous spring, Friskarina was soon half-way up the ivy-tree, shaking down a shower of white flakes every jump she made. At length she was fairly at the top of the wall. It was a terrible height from the ground, and there was no ivy on the other side to help her down by.

So she sat down to rest, and look about

her a minute. The miserable cottages looked still *more* miserable than they had done the day before — the snow lay thick on their roofs — no smoke issued from their chimneys — no one seemed stirring about them. Nothing could well be more desolate.

Suddenly, the door of one of them opened, and an old woman came out, followed by Friskarina's new friend, the unhappy cat. Such an old woman Friskarina had never beheld, nor imagined, before. She was not a bit like the Lady Dumbellinda, the princess's governess, the only old lady Friskarina had ever seen, for *she* was very fat, and had very rosy cheeks, and very smooth hair, in set curls that never seemed to get out of order; and she had very fine velvet gowns, and beautiful clothes. But this poor old woman, who came out of the hut, was all shrivelled up, as it were, and seemed as if she had hardly a bit of flesh on her bones, and her hair was nearly as white as the snow, and the wind blew it from under her cap in all directions; she had an old rag of a gray

cloak on, that she tried to keep about her, with one hand, as well as she could, but the wind got in so through the holes, that she might almost as well have been without it. She had come out to look for sticks; for the gusts that swept down from the hills snapped off the little twigs from the tall trees, and scattered them about the road. After picking up a few, the poor old creature, shaking her head, and shivering beneath the cold blast, turned back, and re-entered her cottage; shutting her door after her, so that her cat was left without. Poor pussy soon spied her friend, who had spoken so condescendingly to her the day before, on the top of the wall, and she saluted her with an air of the greatest deference and humility.

Friskarina returned her a gracious bow, and, without further hesitation, dropped down from the wall.

It was lucky for her that there was a good thick bed of snow at the bottom, so that she fell soft; but she rolled quite over. How-

ever, she was nothing the worse, and she ran up to her new acquaintance; and, after remarking what a snowy morning it was, demanded her name.

'My mistress calls me Tibb, please your ladyship;' said the poor little cat, shaking with the cold.

'I did not know whether I should see you this morning,' pursued Friskarina, 'I thought you might be sitting by the fire all day, as it is so very cold.'

'Dear ma'am, we have no fire!' exclaimed poor Tibb, as if astonished at the very idea of such a luxury; 'my mistress won't have a fire till she wants to boil her dinner.'

'Then how do you ever keep yourself warm?' asked Friskarina, quite horror-struck.

'Please, my lady, I never *am* warm,' said poor Tibb, in a very melancholy voice.

Friskarina was ready to cry, 'And you say they never give you any dinner, either?' she said.

'Very seldom, indeed, your ladyship.'

'But your mistress must be dreadfully cruel,' exclaimed Friskarina, 'to take no more care of you than that!'

'What can she do?' replied Tibb, 'she has not got enough for herself and her daughter, so it is not likely she can give me anything. If your gracious ladyship would just please to step this way, and peep under the door, you will see how my mistress lives.' So saying, Tibb led the way to the hut; and Friskarina, crouching down to a very wide chink under the door, saw a dwelling, the mere notion of which had never entered her imagination till that moment.

'And have you lived *here* all your life?' she said, drawing back at length, and looking with the most sincere compassion at Tibb.

'Where else could I go, my lady?' replied the poor cat; 'it is better than lying in the road.'

'And you absolutely don't know what it is to have a good dinner? How very shocking! But now listen to me, Tibb; do you

think you can manage to climb over that wall?'

'I can but try,' replied Tibb, looking as if she began to have an indistinct idea that her new friend meant to do something for her.

'Then,' continued Friskarina, 'if you will follow me, and keep quiet behind the trees in the garden, I will give you part of my dinner every day.'

Tibb's eyes sparkled as they had never sparkled before, at this generous proposal; and, running to the wall, by the help of a projecting stone here and there, she was presently at the top; then, turning round, she watched Friskarina ascending after her. To scramble down by the ivy-branches was the work of a moment, and the two cats were soon hidden behind some low evergreen bushes that grew in front of the wall.

'Now lie quiet here,' said Friskarina, 'till I come and call you.' So saying, she scampered off through the snow towards the palace. The door of the princess's

drawing-room was not quite shut, so Friskarina softly pushed it a little open, and peeped cautiously in.

Just as she expected, there sat Glumdalkin, on a high stool close by the fire, looking more *solid* than ever, and her back so awfully broad! Moreover, she did not look by any means in the best of humors; but she unbuttoned her eyes a very little atom as Friskarina came towards the fire, and in a very gruff voice, asked her where she had been so long?

'I'll tell you directly,' replied Friskarina; 'but really I must get a little warm first, my jaws are quite stiff.'

'And it serves you right, too,' remarked the amiable Glumdalkin; 'if you *will* go out in the snow, when you might have a good warm house over your head, and sit by the fire, you must take the consequences.'

Now, from some cause or other, Friskarina felt just then in a very particularly good humor; so she answered, in a very cheerful tone, that she was quite ready to take all

the consequences, and that she hoped *some* good ones, at least, would follow from her going out that morning. — 'Though, indeed,' she added, 'I have been seeing some very sad things.'

'Then, as sure as cream is cream,' exclaimed Glumdalkin, quite fiercely, 'you've been talking to that good-for-nothing wretch of a cat again. I am astonished at you, Friskarina!'

'Now, my dear cousin,' answered Friskarina, very quietly, 'just hear me — let us talk the matter over a little: I am sure you would feel just as I do about it, if you had been with me this morning.'

'Humph,' muttered Glumdalkin, '*I'm* not sure of that at all. But, tell your story, child. We shan't have any peace, I suppose, till you have.'

Friskarina gulphed down a rather sharp speech that was just at the end of her tongue, and went on with the recital of her adventures: — 'I have certainly seen the poor cat; and the cottage, too, in which she

lives — O Glumdalkin! such a place it is, you never saw anything like it; there was not a bit of fire on the hearth, and in one corner there lay a woman on a heap of straw, with an old rug over her. She was not at all like the princess, or the maids of honor, for she had such a thin white face, and such skinny hands, it was dreadful to look at her — she was quite as thin as the poor cat: and the old woman, I mean the cat's mistress, was stooping over her, and giving her something out of a broken cup. Poor old woman! she groaned so, when she looked at her, that it really went to my heart to hear her.'

'And pray,' interrupted Glumdalkin, 'what's all this to us? I do think you take quite a delight in making one low spirited; as if the day wasn't quite dismal enough already. Of course, one's very sorry for the people, and all that sort of thing, but what good can *you* do, I should like to know, poking your nose into such places? You can't do anything for them; and why

should you put yourself into such a ridiculous fuss? If you were the princess, now, you *might* help the people — but you, a *cat*, what can you do? It's no concern of yours.'

'It is too true,' sighed Friskarina, 'I can do no good to the old woman and her sick daughter; but, with your leave, Cousin Glumdalkin, I *can* do something for the poor cat, and that will be better than nothing: if one can't do what one would, one ought to do what one can. And now, my dear good Cousin Glumdalkin, I want you to lend me a helping paw, if you please.'

'Well, what now?' grumbled Glumdalkin.

'Why, you know they always give us our dinner behind the laurel trees, on the grass, and you know, too, that they give us more than we want; indeed, more than is good for us — for don't you remember, when you were ill last autumn, the doctor said you ought to live more sparingly? and they

never take away the bits when we have done; so that it is all our own property, and I was thinking that if you would be so very kind as to leave a bone or two that you really don't want, and I will do the same, the poor ——'

Astonishment and indignation had, so far, kept Glumdalkin silent; but now, finding voice once more, she burst forth into a perfect torrent of wrath, declaring that not one bone would she leave — no! that she wouldn't. *She* wouldn't be answerable for bringing a parcel of thieving cats about the house — a pretty thing indeed! — what did Friskarina think the princess would say?

Friskarina meekly replied, that there would certainly be no thieving in the case; for that their dinner was all their own, and if they did not eat it all, it would only be left on the grass, to moulder away; and she really could not think the princess would have any objection to their relieving the poor cat's want, out of their own abundance. But these, and other similar arguments were

all wasted upon the selfish Glumdalkin: she jumped down from her stool in a passion, turned her back upon Friskarina, rolled herself round into a great black ball, and seemed in a few moments to be fast asleep. Not that she was asleep, though; and her bad humor was not much mended by hearing the princess, who was lying on her sofa, call Friskarina to her, in her most endearing accents: — 'Her dear, good, darling little Friskarina.'

'It's most uncommonly odd that she never calls for *me*,' thought Glumdalkin.

Meanwhile, Friskarina had jumped up to her mistress, who stroked her fondly, and kissed her, and Friskarina felt her face wet with tears.

'What can be the matter with the princess?' thought she; 'I am sure *she* can't have any troubles; O I wish she could see that poor woman in the cottage!'

One o'clock — and the great bell of the palace rang — and then the cats always went down to dinner, and the princess went

down to her luncheon. And a grand luncheon it was, for it happened that day to be the princess's birth-day, and three of her cousins were coming to dine with her, and they were going to have *such* a plum-pudding — so *very* big; and there was to be an elephant and castle, made of sugar, all over gilding, at the top. But, somehow, when the princess sat down to her luncheon, she did not look happy, notwithstanding her birth-day, and her three cousins, and the great plum-pudding they were going to have.

'May it please your royal highness,' said the tall page, Grandmagnificolowsky, 'shall I put the cats' meat in the hall for them, as the snow is so deep in the garden, to-day?'

'No, no, nonsense!' replied the princess, who had just helped herself to the breast of a partridge, 'put it in the old place in the garden; and here — put this wing and leg upon the dish too.'

Did not Glumdalkin's eyes sparkle when she got to the dish, and found the wing of

the partridge; how she devoured it! She was really so busy, that she actually was some minutes before she discovered that Friskarina had gently drawn away a mutton bone, with some beautiful picking upon it, to a spot at a little distance among the trees, and that she had then come quietly back, and was making her own dinner upon the drumstick of a chicken, which she was eating very deliberately, as if she were trying to make it last as long as possible. There was still the leg of the partridge left, and two or three other very delicate tit-bits, besides two large slices of cold roast-beef. Glumdalkin had hardly swallowed the last morsel of the wing, and was just thinking about the leg, when, to her unspeakable surprise, the house-door opened, and out came the princess, attended by one of the maids of honor, and followed by Grandmagnificolowsky. The ladies were muffled up in their fur cloaks, and the maid of honor seemed to be carrying a basket. Poor famished Glumdalkin! so great was her astonishment, that she posi-

tively paused, with her claw suspended over the leg of the partridge, to see what her royal highness could possibly be about.

The princess no sooner came up to the place where the cats were dining, than, stopping, she commanded the page to carry Glumdalkin back to the house. 'That cat will eat herself into an apoplexy,' she said; 'I never saw such a greedy creature!'

The astonishment, the indignation of Glumdalkin, what words can describe? It *has* been said, that she positively set up her back and hissed at the princess; but I can hardly believe *that*. However, whether she did or not, it made no difference. Grandmagnificolowsky picked her up, and carried her into the house, not without plenty of scratches for his trouble. The princess and the maid of honor passed on, and went out at the garden door.

Here was a golden opportunity for Friskarina! She ran behind the bushes, where Tibb was munching her bone with all her might; and telling her to eat all that was

left upon the dish, sat by, watching her with the utmost satisfaction in her countenance, though she certainly had not had a very capital dinner herself. Poor little Tibb! She looked as if she hardly knew how to eat, for sheer joy! However, she *did* finish at last; and then, running up to Friskarina, called her her only friend — her deliverer from starvation — and said many other very affectionate things besides. But Friskarina cut them short, by begging her to go home without delay, for fear the gardener should find her, and hang her up to the apple-tree. That conclusion of her morning's adventures not appearing desirable to poor Tibb, she lost no time in following her friend's advice, and, with a scramble or two, was soon over the wall, and on her road home.

Now Friskarina had a strong idea that it would be advisable to keep out of Glumdalkin's way that afternoon as long as possible, having a pretty tolerable notion of the sort of temper her respected relative would be most likely to be found in, so, cold as it was

out-of-doors, Friskarina could not muster resolution to go into the house till it was really getting quite late, almost tea-time. So she amused herself with making foot-marks in the snow, and running after the twigs that the wind blew about, and such like diversions, till it got almost dark, and she began to feel very hungry, for she had not had much dinner. That put her in mind of her new friend; and she reflected, with great satisfaction, that poor Tibb certainly was not nearly so hungry that night as she had been before: and then she began to wonder where the princess could have been going to, and whether she would see the poor old woman at the cottage: and Friskarina thought what a fine thing it must be to be a princess, and to be able to help people who were in distress. What a great deal of good I would do! thought she, as she threw herself down to rest upon a little heap of snow. I would be so careful, and never waste anything; and I would have all the bones saved for the poor cats round my palace; and,—

O what a deal of good I would do, if I were only a great lady, like the princess! Just then, a very odd thought came into Friskarina's head. She began to consider whether she *had* done all the good she might have done, as it was: and suddenly it struck her, that she had very often, indeed, ate a great deal more dinner than she really wanted, just because it happened to be nice; and she remembered, that once or twice old Bear, the watch-dog, who was chained up in the yard, had said to her, how glad he should be to have something more to eat; and yet it was very odd, but it had never occurred to her, that she might so easily have saved him a bone or two at her dinner time, and yet have had plenty for herself too.

So poor little Friskarina hung her head down, and felt quite ashamed; the tears came into her eyes. 'Poor Bear!' she said, 'I might have helped you very often, if I had only thought about you. I'm afraid I have been very selfish!'

And then she began to think, that per-

haps it was rather unkind in her not to go and look after poor old Glumdalkin, who was, no doubt, in no very *happy* mood. So, screwing up her courage as well as she could, she trotted up stairs, and, finding that the princess was just entering the drawing-room, she slipped in after her. The fire was blazing gloriously; but, at first, Friskarina was quite unable to see anything of her second cousin once removed, (I'm afraid Friskarina now and then sincerely wished her removed altogether!) for though the fire was bright, there were no candles in the room, and it was a very large one, so that the further extremity of it was rather dark. So she began looking round, for she could not imagine where the old cat could be gone to: at last, quite at the far end, she thought she perceived some black object behind one of the chairs, and, on going up to it, found Glumdalkin, with her eyes closed, her head very erect, her tail curled very tight round her toes, and her whole person apparently immovable, except, now and then, an angry twitch at the end of her tail.

Friskarina saw plain enough that she was not asleep; so, as she really felt rather sorry for her, she asked her if she did not feel cold, sitting so far from the fire.

'I beg, Ma'am, you won't trouble yourself about me,' was the gracious reply; 'if I chose to sit by the fire, I should do so: I suppose the princess would not order me out!' this was said with such a strange kind of hysterical laugh, that Friskarina thought she was going to burst into a fit of crying.

'Come,' she said, kindly, 'don't be so unhappy, my dear Glumdalkin! I am sure the princess did not mean to be unkind to you; I do think she was only afraid you might, perhaps, not be quite careful enough —might take more than was really good for you; I'm quite certain she did not intend anything uncivil.'

'And do you mean to say,' screamed Glumdalkin, 'that, at my time of life, I'm to be dictated to by a young thing like the princess, and that I can't be trusted to eat my dinner? No, indeed, I won't submit to

it! *I'm* not going to bear such indignities! The princess will find out her mistake when I am gone.'

'But,' said Friskarina, very gently, 'what can you do?'

'Do!' said Glumdalkin, striking her paw with great violence upon the top of a foot-stool, 'do! why, can't I leave the palace? You don't suppose I shall remain here another day, do you? I shall look out for another situation directly — a cat like myself won't go a-begging.'

Friskarina was so astonished at this sudden resolve, that it was a minute or two before she could answer; at length, she quietly asked when Glumdalkin intended to quit the palace.

'To-morrow, decidedly;' replied Glumdalkin, 'perhaps I may stay till after dinner, there's a basket of fish just come in, and I am really not strong enough to encounter the fatigue of the thing in a morning, it will be a great trial to me — very great.' And Glumdalkin put her paw up to her

eyes for a few moments; but Friskarina thought it did not look at all wet when she put it down.

'I am very much concerned for you,' she said; 'and I do strongly recommend to you not to think of going away: you will be lost in the snow, and I am sure you would not like to take shelter in any of the cottages; think what wretched places they are! What will become of you? you will lose your way in the woods, or fall a prey to some wild beast; do pray think better of it.'

Glumdalkin sat silent for some minutes, seemingly plunged in the most dismal meditations.

'Well,' she said, at length, in a rather mollified tone, 'I have no doubt you would all miss me dreadfully; you, especially, Friskarina, as you are so young and giddy, and so little able to take care of yourself; we will see, I don't wish to do anything unkind by you —'

Just at that moment Grandmagnifico-

lowsky entered with the princess's supper; and as the princess called 'Puss! puss!' several times, Glumdalkin was forced at last to present herself, being rather hungry besides; so she lapped a saucer of cream that her mistress condescended to pour out for her, much more thankfully than usual, and then went off to bed, thinking that, after all, she *might*, perhaps, vouchsafe to remain in the palace; and she dreamt all night that she was being pursued by wolves in a forest, and was forced to take refuge in a miserable hut, where she had nothing to eat but a bit of mouldy cheese, and nothing to drink but a drop of muddy water.

What did little Friskarina dream about? I can't tell you; but the first thing she thought of, when she awoke in the morning, was poor Tibb, and the wretched cold bed she had that night — how different from her own, with its nice soft warm cushions.

Glumdalkin got up later than usual, and looked nearly as cross as when she went to bed; but she said nothing more about

going: and Friskarina took care at breakfast to show her every possible good-natured attention; she gave her by much the largest share of the cream, took the draughty side of the hearthrug herself, and, in short, did everything she could to show that she was anxious to be kind and civil to her; but all her little politenesses seemed nearly lost upon Glumdalkin.

She sate, humped up, all the morning by the fire, with her shoulders up to her ears, and with a gleam in her eyes, if anybody came near her, that was positively savage.

The princess sat in her drawing-room, looking very thoughtful and rather sad. It was certainly very stupid work in the drawing-room that morning.

Friskarina got tired of such dull company, and set off into the garden. But first of all, she ran down into the court-yard, to have a little conversation with Bear, the watch-dog, and hear the news. Moreover, she wanted to find out how Bear's own affairs were going on, and whether he had enough to eat

now. And so, after a little chat about the weather, and the probability of the wolves coming down from the mountains, and so forth, she ventured delicately to inquire into the state of his finances, as regarded bones and such things; and she learnt, to her great satisfaction, that, since the new cook came into office, Bear had been living in clover, as it were. Come, thought Friskarina, that's one good thing, however; now I may keep all my spare bits for poor Tibb! So, after a little further conversation about the affairs of the nation, for Bear was a great politician, and read the 'Canine Guardian' three times a week, and talked very learnedly about the game laws, the friends parted. Bear laid himself down to sleep in his kennel, and Friskarina scampered off into the garden, to watch for Tibb's descent over the wall.

Punctually as the great bell of the palace rung, Tibb's ears appeared among the top leaves of the ivy, and in a second she was at her benefactress's side, looking so much

less miserable than she did at first, that it quite rejoiced Friskarina to look at her.

And now the house door opened, and out came a page, carrying a large dish full of chicken bones, slices of meat, pieces of fish, and such like delicate morsels, and closely followed by Mrs. Glumdalkin, making such a clamorous mewing that one would have thought she had had no breakfast.

Tibb, luckily, was hidden by a low bush; or I would not answer for it that Glumdalkin would not have flown at her. However, she was too much taken up with her dinner just then to look about her; for seeing a beautiful piece of cold sole among the bits on the dish, and being dreadfully afraid that Friskarina might take a fancy to it, she seized upon it, and swallowed such a great piece whole, that the back-bone stuck in her throat, and she could neither get it up nor down. She coughed — she gasped — but there the bone stuck, — she coughed again, quite convulsively, still the bone remained immovable; Friskarina, who was at a little

distance, grew very much alarmed, and running up to her, thumped her on the back; but all in vain, her struggles became absolutely frightful to witness; she kicked, she groaned — she started to her feet, and ran, in an agony, like a mad thing, twice round the grass, shrieking with pain; at length, sinking down, completely exhausted, she stretched out her limbs, quite stiff, and giving a fearful groan, breathed her last!

Friskarina, exceedingly terrified, ran behind the bushes to call Tibb to her assistance, for she did not know, at first, that Glumdalkin was really dead: but what was her astonishment to find Tibb gone, and in the place where she had left her, an odd looking old lady, in a red satin petticoat, trimmed with gold fringe, a gray cloak, a hat with a very high crown, and she carried in her hand a long ebony stick, with a queer silver head to it.

'Come hither, pretty Friskarina!' cried the old lady; and stooping down, she patted her back, saying, 'So you were going to

save your own dinner for me, you good little creature.' Friskarina looked at her with the utmost amazement; and it was not much lessened when the old Fairy (for it was the princess's aunt), stroking her again, thanked her for the good lesson she had taught her niece. What a strange old lady; thought Friskarina, what can she possibly mean?

Meanwhile, the princess had been looking out of the window, and perceived her fairy aunt, with a little secret consternation, for she was rather afraid of her; however, she hastened down stairs to receive her, wondering all the time what she could be come for.

'So, niece!' was the old lady's salutation, 'I find you have been indebted to your cat for the best lesson you have had for this many a day.'

The princess stooped down to kiss the fairy's hand. 'It is too true, indeed, dear aunt;' she replied, 'but I hope it is a lesson which I shall be the better for as long as I live. I blush to think that I should

have been so long insensible to the wants and miseries of the poor people who were dwelling so near me, till, as you say, my little cat's example taught me how selfish and unfeeling I had been.'

'It is well for you, niece,' said the fairy, 'that you visited the poor old woman's cottage yesterday, and took her what was needful to supply her wants; for you little thought,' added the old woman, laughing rather maliciously, 'that the poor miserable cat, who was sitting behind the door, was your old aunt. I say, it was lucky for you that you bethought yourself at last of your duty; or, I promise you, the last should have been your very last night in your palace — *that* it should,' she continued with increasing vehemence, striking her stick on the ground till the walk rang again. 'Let me find things *very* different when I pay you my next visit!' And with these words, waving her ebony wand in the air, the fairy vanished; and the princess found that her own fine dress had disappeared too, and that

a gown of plain gray cloth had taken its place.

But only imagine her consternation when she went into the palace! All the gay things were gone out of the drawing-room; the thick velvet curtains no longer hung from the windows — there were no soft easy chairs — no pretty ornaments; her beautiful silver nautilus-shell, with its pale blue satin curtains, was gone also; and in its place, there was a plain little bed, with brown stuff furniture, so exceedingly ugly and dismal, that the princess declared to herself she should never be able to get a wink of sleep in it. In short, all her favorite apartments wore an air of what seemed to her the most utter desolation.

Yet the princess had all the necessaries of life left; there was plenty of bread and meat in the larder, though all the dainty things were gone; there were coals and wood enough in the cellar; she had a good bed to lie upon; and her house was a palace still in comparison with the cottage of the poor

old woman who lived near her gate. But she was some time in finding that out. Poor princess! when she looked round her drawing-room, she burst into tears. Just then, a voice near her said, 'They are taken away till you have learnt to pity others, and to be unselfish!' She turned, and caught a glimpse of the Fairy's red petticoat disappearing through the door-way.

When she was sufficiently recovered to go round the house, and see what was left, she found, to her great satisfaction, that all her money was spared, and she determined, in future, to make a very different use of it.

The melancholy decease of Glumdalkin threw several distinguished families in Catland into mourning; but I never heard that any body particularly lamented her.

'And so the princess and Friskarina went on living together in the palace?'

Why no, not exactly: but you shall hear about it. One fine bright morning, not many days after the Fairy's visit, Friskarina was sitting, all by herself, on the drawing-

room window-seat, thinking over all the wonderful things that had happened, when suddenly she saw, flying past the house, a pair of milk-white doves, with silver collars round their necks, and bearing between them what seemed to be a small white box, which they gently placed upon the lawn, and then they flew away. The white box grew taller and taller, larger and larger; till, in a few minutes, there stood the loveliest little cottage you ever beheld. Its walls were of the richest carved ivory — there were two parlors in it, one for the winter, which faced the south, and was lined with crimson velvet, and the other for summer, hung with sea-green silk. The chairs and tables were of satin-wood; the cups and saucers of the prettiest porcelain; and there were crystal flower-pots in the windows, filled with maiden-blush roses and lilies-of-the-valley. Over the door was written in golden letters,

'A PRESENT FOR FRISKARINA.'

I do not think you ever beheld such a

charming dwelling for a cat; and Friskarina took possession of it, and commenced housekeeping directly, and the princess presented her with a superb silver cream-jug, towards her stock of furniture. And, as there were more rooms in her cottage than she wanted for her own use, Friskarina took in six infirm, homeless cats, advanced in life, and provided for them as long as they lived; and when they died, she supplied their places with others, equally necessitous. As Glumdalkin died without a will, Friskarina, being her nearest relation, of course, succeeded to her property, which chiefly consisted of that delightful soft bed, of yellow satin, which I told you about before, and which, together with her own, Friskarina immediately set aside for the use of the two oldest and most rheumatic cats in her establishment.

And now I must tell you a little more about the princess: when the Fairy paid her next visit to her, which was in about a year's time, she found a great change for the better in her. Instead of lying in her bed

half the morning, she was up by six; instead of sitting all day on the sofa, reading nothing but story-books and silly fairy-tales (which, of course, sensible people never read), she studied wise books of history and geography, and made flannel petticoats, and knitted warm stockings for the poor, and went to see them at their own dwellings: in short, she had become as useful as she had been idle and selfish before. The wretched huts at her gate were gone, and in their place was a very pretty row of cottages; and such nice, neat old people lived in them — for, as for the young and healthy, the princess ordered them to go out into the world and earn their own livelihood.

'But, did the princess ever get back her fine things?'

Why that is rather a puzzling question. Some people say that she never did: others believe that the Fairy made her the offer of them, but that she declined it, thinking that she should, perhaps, grow too fond of them

again: while some other people say, that the Fairy gave her back those things which her high station as a princess required, but, that the young lady herself begged her to keep those things which would only have tended to make her vain and self-indulgent. And I am very much disposed myself to think that this account of the matter is the true one.

THE DISCONTENTED CAT.

ONCE upon a time — I can't say exactly when it was — there stood a neat, tidy little hut on the borders of a wild forest. A poor old woman dwelt in this hut. She lived on the whole pretty comfortably; for, though she was poor, she was able to keep a few goats, that supplied her with milk, and a flock of chickens, that gave her fresh eggs every morning: and then she had a small garden, which she cultivated with her own hands, and that supplied her with cabbages and other vegetables, besides gooseberries and apples for dumplings. Her goats browsed upon the short grass just outside the garden, and her chickens ran about everywhere, and picked up everything they could find. There were some fine old trees which defended the cottage on three sides

from the cold winds, and the front was to the south; so it was very snug and sheltered. The forest afforded her sticks and young logs for fuel, so that she never was in want of a fire; and, altogether, she managed to make out a pretty comfortable life of it, as times went.

The only friend and companion the old woman had, was her gray cat. Now, the cat was a middle-aged cat: she had arrived at a time of life when people grow reflective; and she sat by the hearth and reflected very often. What did she reflect about? That is rather a long story. You must know, then, that a few leagues from the old woman's hut, on the other side of the forest, there rose a grand castle, belonging to a very great baron. And sometimes, on fine summer mornings, as the old woman and the cat were sitting in the sunshine, by the door, the old woman at her spinning-wheel, and puss curled up for a nap after her breakfast, the forest would suddenly ring with the sound of hunting-horns, shouts

and laughter; and a train of gay ladies and richly dressed gentlemen would sweep by on horseback, with hawk and hound, and followed by servants in splendid liveries; for the baron was fond of hawking and hunting, and frequently took those diversions in the neighboring forests. Now, it so happened, that in one of the tall trees behind the cottage, there lived a magpie: not by any means an ordinary magpie, but a bird that had seen a good deal of the world; indeed, at one time of her life, she had, as she took care to inform every body, lived in the service of the Countess Von Rustenfustenmustencrustenberg. How she happened to leave such a grand situation, the magpie never explained: to be sure, some ill-natured people *did* say that there had been an awkward story about the loss of one of the countess's diamond bracelets, which was found one fine morning, in the inside of a hollow tree in the garden; and that Mag was turned away in disgrace directly. But how the matter really was, I cannot say: all

that I know is, that she took up her abode half-way up one of the large oaks, behind the old woman's hut, a long time before our story begins; and that, being of a particularly sociable and chatty disposition, she soon established an ardent friendship with the cat, and they became the greatest cronies in the world. So when, as I said just now, the baron's grand hunting parties swept past, they afforded the magpie a fine opportunity for displaying her knowledge of life and the world. And sometimes, too, she would dwell at great length on the splendor and happiness she had enjoyed while she lived with the countess in her palace, till the cat's fur almost stood on end to hear the wonders she related. — What a place that palace must have been! very different, indeed, from the old woman's cottage!

Now, these conversations with the magpie sadly unsettled the mind of the cat; more particularly when the magpie related to her how daintily the Countess Von Rustenfustenmustencrustenberg's cat always lived — what

nice bits of chicken she dined upon, what delicious morsels of buttered crumpet she often had for breakfast, what soft cushions she lay upon, and a great deal more to the same purpose: all which made a powerful impression upon our humble friend. So she sate and reflected by the fire, while the good old woman, her mistress, went on spinning the wool which she sold afterwards at the nearest town, to buy food and clothes.

The more the cat talked to the magpie, the more dissatisfied she became with her present condition; till, at last, I am sadly afraid that when, in a morning, the old woman gave her her breakfast of goats' milk with some nice brown bread broken into it, she began rather to despise it, instead of taking it thankfully, as she ought to have done, for she was really very comfortably off in the cottage — having bread and milk every morning and night, and something for dinner too; besides what mice she could catch, to say nothing of a stray robin or sparrow now and then. But, as I said just

now, the magpie's chattering stories unsettled her; she thought it would be so charming to dine upon bits of roast chicken, and have buttered crumpets for breakfast, and fine cushions to lie upon, like the countess's cat. All this was very silly, no doubt; but she wanted experience: she knew nothing of the thousands and thousands of poor cats who would have thought *her* life quite luxurious. It is a very bad thing to get unsettled; it sets people wishing and doing many foolish things.

One fine bright evening, the magpie was perched upon a projecting bough of her oak, and the cat, who thought the cottage particularly dull that day, had come out for a little gossip.

'Good evening!' screamed the magpie, as soon as she saw her; 'do come up here and let us talk politics a little.' So the cat climbed up, and seated herself on another bough a little below.

'You look out of spirits to-day;' began the magpie, bending down a very inquisitive

eye to her friend's face; I am afraid you are not well; but I'm not surprised: that old sparrow I saw you eating for dinner must have been as tough as leather; it is no wonder you are ill after it! You should really be more careful, and only catch the nice tender young ones.'

'Thank you,' replied the cat, in a rather melancholy tone; 'I am perfectly well.'

'Then what in the world ails you, my dear friend?'

'I don't know,' answered the cat; 'but I believe I am getting rather tired of staying here all my life.'

'Ah!' exclaimed the magpie, 'I know what that is — I feel for you, puss! you may well be moped, living in that stupid cottage all day. You are not like myself, now; *I* have had such advantages! I declare to you I can amuse myself the whole day with the recollection of the wonderful things I have seen when I lived in the great world.'

'There it is!' interrupted the cat; 'to

think of the difference in people's situations! Just compare my condition, in this wretched hole of a hut, with the life that you say the countess's cat lives. I'm sure I can hardly eat my sop in the morning for thinking of her buttered crumpets — dear! dear! it's a fine thing to be born in a palace!'

'Indeed,' replied the magpie, 'there is a great deal of truth in what you say; and sometimes I half repent of having retired from her service myself; but there's a great charm in liberty — it is pleasant to feel able to fly about wherever one likes, and have no impertinent questions asked.'

'Does the countess's cat ever do any work?' inquired puss.

'Not a bit,' answered the magpie. 'I don't suppose she ever caught a mouse in her life; why should she? She has plenty to eat and drink, and nothing to do but to sleep or play all day long.'

'What a life!' ejaculated the cat; 'and here am I, obliged to take the trouble to catch birds or anything I can, if I want to

make out my dinner, — what a world it is!'

'Your most obedient servant, ladies!' just at that moment hooted an old owl from a neighboring fir-tree; 'a fine evening to you!'

'Dear me, Mr. Owl! how you made me jump!' cried the magpie, rather pettishly; 'I had nearly toppled down from the bough — '

To say the truth, the magpie did not particularly fancy the owl's company — he was apt to come out with very rude things sometimes; besides, he was reckoned a very sensible bird, and Mag always declared she hated sensible birds — they were so dreadfully dull, and thought themselves so much wiser than other people.

'I beg pardon — I am afraid I have interrupted an interesting discourse,' began the owl, observing that his salutation had rather discomposed the magpie.

The cat, however, was not sorry to have the opportunity of imparting her griefs and perplexities to a bird who was so generally respected for his wisdom; so she replied: —

'Why, indeed, my dear sir, we were conversing upon the lamentable differences there are in the world.'

'You may well say that,' answered the owl, giving a blink with his left eye. 'I suppose, now, ma'am,' he added, rather dryly, turning to the magpie, 'your ladyship finds a good deal of difference between your present abode, and the countess's grand palace-garden? I only wonder how you could bring yourself to make such a change — at your time of life, especially.'

What an abominable uncivil speech, thought the magpie; she fidgetted upon the branch, drew herself up, and muttered something between her beak about the propriety of people attending to their own concerns.

'But *you*, my dear cat,' continued the owl, 'you have every reason, I should think, to be perfectly satisfied with your lot in life?'

'I am not so sure of that,' said the cat; '*I* think I have a good many reasons for being quite the contrary; the countess's cat has buttered crumpets and cream for break-

fast, and sleeps on a beautiful soft cushion all night, and all day too, if she likes it: and just look what a dull life of it I lead here! and I have nothing but the hearth to lie upon, and nothing for breakfast but milk and brown bread!'

'And you ought to be thankful you can get that!' cried the owl, quite angrily. 'I tell you what, Mrs. Puss, I have seen more of the world than you have, and I just say this for your comfort — if you could see how *some* poor cats live, you would be glad enough of your present condition.'

'Humph!' muttered the cat, 'I really don't know how you have contrived to see so much of the world, sitting as you do in a tree all day, blinking your eyes as if you couldn't bear a ray of sunshine: now, with all due submission to your superior wisdom, I should think the magpie ought to know something of life, after the high society she has lived in, — and I do say it is a shame that one cat should have buttered crumpets and cream for breakfast, just because she

happens to live in a palace, while another has only brown sop, because *she* happens to live in a cottage!'

'But suppose,' replied the owl, 'that some other cat, who lives in a cellar, and never gets anything to eat, except what she can pick up in the gutters, should take it into her head to say, "What a shame it is that some cats should have nice snug cottages over their heads, and warm hearths to sit by, and bread and milk for breakfast, while I am obliged to live in this horrid cold cellar, and never know how to get a mouthful?"'

The cat was rather disconcerted by this observation at first; but presently answered:

'My dear Mr. Owl, don't let us exaggerate, — you can't seriously mean to say there are any cats in the world in such a condition as you speak of? I am sure the magpie, with all her experience of life, would have told me about it, if it were really so — you must be mistaken.'

The magpie, by this time, had become exceedingly tired of such a long silence, and was beginning to think that she had stood upon her dignity quite long enough.

'You will excuse me, my worthy friend,' she said, turning to the owl, 'but really you do sit there so, day after day, blinking in the sun, without a soul to speak to, that I don't wonder at your taking very strange fancies into your head. I can only say, that during the whole of my residence in the palace of the Countess Von Rustenfustenmustencrustenberg, my late respected mistress, *I* never came in contact with any cat in the condition you are pleased to imagine; and I should know something of the world, I think.'

'Well,' replied the owl, quietly, 'I will not dispute your ladyship's knowledge of the world, but I strongly advise our friend Mrs. Puss to remain contented at home, and not try to improve her fortune by going into the town: people should learn to know when they are well off.'

Just then, patter, patter, patter, came a few large drops through the leaves; the magpie making a prodigious chattering, and declaring that a tremendous storm was coming on, flew down from the bough; and, whispering the cat not to mind what the owl said — 'a stupid old bird!' — she presently hid herself, very snug, in a hollow place in the trunk: not very sorry, to say the truth, to break up the conversation. The owl very deliberately nestled himself in a thick bush of ivy that grew near, and the cat ran into the cottage, to sit by the fire and reflect; for between her two friends, her mind was a little perplexed.

The old woman shut the cottage door, heaped some dry fir-logs on the fire, and sate down to her spinning-wheel. The rain pelted against the shutters, the wind howled in the tree-tops, and roared loudly in the forest behind the hut; it was a terrible night out of doors, but within the cottage it was snug enough,— the fire was blazing merrily, the old woman's wheel turned

briskly round, the kettle was singing a low quiet song to itself beside the crackling logs, and the cat was sitting on the hearth, looking warm and comfortable. But I am afraid she was not at all comfortable — in her mind; for discontented people seldom are. It never entered her head to consider whether there were any poor cats abroad that night, without a shelter over them; for grumblers are always selfish, and never think of the wants of others. In fact, she could think of nothing, just at that time, but the luxuries enjoyed by the fortunate cats who might happen to be born in grand palaces; so, curled up in the warmest corner of the hearth, she sate watching the little spouts of flame that kept flashing up from the pine logs, and wishing, for the hundredth time that day, that she had had the good luck to be a palace cat. Presently a very strange thing happened to her.

All of a sudden she felt something very lightly touch her coat; and looking round, there stood, close by her, the most beautiful

little thing that anybody ever dreamt of. She was not many inches high; her robe seemed made of gold and silver threads, fine as gossamer, woven together: on her head she wore a circlet of diamonds, so small and bright, that they looked like sparks of fire, and in her tiny hand she bore a long and very slight silver wand — it was more like a very, *very* fine knitting-pin than anything else.

The cat looked at her with unutterable astonishment: it was very odd that the old woman did not seem to see her at all.

The beautiful little lady looked at the cat for a minute or two very steadily, and then said, 'You are wishing for something; what is it?'

By this time the cat had sufficiently recovered from her consternation to be able to speak: so she answered, 'Please your majesty, whoever you are, you have guessed right for once — I *am* wishing for something: I wish to live in the palace of the magpie's grand countess!'

Wonderful to relate — the words were no sooner spoken, than the Fairy struck her wand upon the floor three times, and lo! and behold! instantly there appeared — though how it got there, I can't imagine — a car made of four large scallop shells joined together, and lined with rich velvet; the wheels were studded with the whitest pearls, and it was drawn by eight silver pheasants. The Fairy seated herself inside, and told the cat to jump in after her. Puss obeyed, and in an instant the hut, the old woman, the little garden, all had vanished! and she and the Fairy were sailing through the air as fast as the eight pheasants could fly.

'Where in the world are we going, please your majesty?' said poor puss, in a dreadfully frightened tone, clinging to the sides of the car with her claws, that she might not be tossed out. 'Hush!' said the Fairy, in a voice so solemn, that the cat did not venture to ask another question.

On — on — on they flew, till the gloomy forest was left far behind; the storm had

subsided; and, as the moon came out from behind the clouds, the cat perceived they were passing over a wild moorland country. On — on, the birds flew, and the wild heath swelled into mountains, and sank again into plain and valley; and they heard beneath them, like the distant sea, the rustling of the wind among clumps of pine-trees. On — on, the birds flew, till, at length there appeared, far before them, the glimmering lights and dim outlines of a stately city. On — on, the birds flew, and the city grew nearer and nearer; turrets and spires and ancient gables rose in the bright moonlight, and the houses grew thicker and thicker together.

At length the pheasants flew more slowly, and the cat saw that they were approaching a very magnificent palace. How her heart beat, partly with fright, partly with the rapid motion, partly with expectation! Yes, they were evidently drawing near to a magnificent palace. It had high towers and curiously carved gateways, that threw strange

deep shadows upon the walls, and the panes of the lattices glittered like diamonds in the moon-beams, and the smoke from the chimneys curled up into the cat's face, and got down her throat, and made her sneeze dreadfully — she wondered how the Fairy could bear it. But now, slowly, slowly, slowly, the wonderful car began to descend, till it was just on a level with one of the windows, which happened, very conveniently, to have been left wide open: so in flew the pheasants, car and all, and alighted on the hearth-rug. 'Jump out — be quick!' cried the Fairy. The cat did not wait to be told twice — she was out in a twinkling; but before she could turn her head round, car, Fairy, and pheasants had vanished, and she was left alone in the strange room. 'To be sure,' she exclaimed to herself, 'was there ever anything so extraordinary?' What an adventure! And what a room it was! It was so large, that three or four huts, like her old mistress's, would have stood in it. The floor was covered with something so

thick, so warm, and so beautiful, all over flowers in bright colors, that she had never seen anything like it before: in short, everything in the room was so fine, or so soft, or so large, or so bright, that the cat could not conceive what such strange things could be meant for.

However, she soon decided that the hearth-rug was the most delightful bed she had ever reposed upon; and, stretching out her limbs upon it, before the huge fire that was burning in the grate, she strove to collect her bewildered ideas ere she proceeded any further to investigate these unknown regions. Suddenly the door opened.

'Dear! what a pretty cat!' exclaimed a waiting-maid, entering the room; 'and just as we were wanting another, too: my lady, the countess, will be quite pleased.' Then, coming up to the cat, she took her in her arms, and began stroking her most affectionately. 'Pretty pussy! how could you ever get into the room? O I see they have left the window open, so you have wandered in

out of the street, poor little cat! It's really quite lucky, just as the old one is dead.' So saying, she again stroked the cat, and carried her away with her into an inner room, where there sat an old lady in an easy chair by the fire, apparently employed in eating her supper.

'Please your ladyship,' said the waiting-woman, 'here's a poor cat come into the house to-night, just as we were wanting one — will your ladyship be pleased to let it remain here?'

'To be sure,' said the old Countess Von Rustenfustenmustencrustenberg (for it was she); 'it has just come in to supply the place of poor old Finette: put it into Finette's bed to-night, Ermengarde, and give it a good meal first, for I dare say it is hungry enough, poor creature! But, first, bring it here, and let me stroke it.'

You may imagine how puss purred her very loudest as the countess patted her, and called her a pretty cat. She thought herself now the luckiest cat in the world: how she

wished that spiteful old owl could but know about it! Ermengarde, the waiting-woman, now took her back into the room she had first entered, and setting her down on the hearth-rug, went out. Presently she returned, and placed before the cat a dish, containing such a supper, as had never entered her imagination till the magpie enlightened her on these subjects: it was some minutes before she could believe it; was it *real?* However, she did it full justice in time; and then, after a great deal more patting and petting, the maid again took her up, and deposited her by the side of the fire, in a very pretty basket lined with soft cushions. And could she go to sleep? Not for some time, in spite of her long ride. It all seemed so strange — so wonderful! that she, who had been longing for months to belong to the household of the Countess Von Rustenfustenmustencrustenberg, should now be actually in her palace! It was extraordinary indeed. But she fell asleep at last.

The next morning the cat was awake

early, and the sun was shining through the satin curtains of the splendid room, and everything in it looked so *very* beautiful! How different from the old woman's hut! So the cat sate up in the basket, and looked about her. After she had thus amused herself in this way for some time, Ermengarde opened the door.

'Well, Pussy,' she said, 'so you are wide awake, and ready, I dare say, for your breakfast.'

Now for the buttered crumpets! thought the cat. The maid went out, and quickly returned with a large saucer full of rich milk, with some roll crumbled into it. No buttered crumpets.

The cat felt a sort of blank feeling of disappointment; it was very odd: but perhaps she should have some another morning. However, she made an exceedingly good breakfast, as it was; but it must be confessed she was a little cross all day. Soon after breakfast, the old countess came in, followed by a lap-dog — a fat, spoilt, disa-

greeable looking animal, and the cat took a dislike to him at first sight. And as for the dog, he almost growled out aloud when the countess stooped down to stroke the cat. It was evident that the hatred was quite mutual.

'Now, Viper,' said the old lady, 'be good! you know you are my own darling, that you are; but you must not quarrel with poor pussy: no fighting you know, Viper!'

Whereupon Viper struggled down out of his mistress's arms, for she had taken him up to bestow a kiss upon him, and giving a short snarl, by way of showing his perfect contempt for her admonition, he mounted upon a stool before the fire, and sat eyeing his new acquaintance with such a fierce pair of eyes, that the poor cat really shook all over, and wished herself safe out of the palace again. However, whenever the countess left the room, she always called Viper away too; so they were not left together at all the first day. On the following, the cat began to get used to Viper's cross looks, and

did not mind him so much: and the old lady petted and made so much of her, that she thought no cat had ever been so fortunate before. As to that, we shall see.

Dinner-time came: and as Viper was to dine with the cat, Ermengarde brought in *two* plates this time, and to work they fell with all their might. Viper had nearly eaten up all his own dinner, and the cat was saving a beautiful merrythought for her last *tit-bit*, when, as ill luck would have it, the countess was suddenly called out of the room.

Instantly, with a growl that sounded in the cat's ears like thunder, Viper darted full at the merrythought, exclaiming:

'You vile little wretch of a stray cat, do you suppose I shall suffer you to come in here, and rob me of my bones?'

'Indeed, my lord,' said the cat, dreadfully frightened, 'I did not mean to take more than my share!'

'And pray, madam,' screamed Viper, 'what do you mean by that? Do you

intend to insinuate that I have taken more than mine? Now, Mrs. Puss, just listen to me once for all, — if you give me any more of your impertinence, I'll worry you to death in two minutes!'

Poor puss! she trembled so from head to tail, that she could hardly stand: but just as she was going to beseech him not to be offended, the countess came in again; and as she soon afterwards took Viper out an airing with her, the cat saw no more of him for that afternoon. Poor puss! she had a great deal of sorrowful reflection all that evening. The result of it was, that she very seriously asked herself what she had gained by leaving her mistress's cottage? To be sure, she had cream for breakfast, and chicken for dinner, but what was that, if, every mouthful she ate, she was in fear of that savage brute of a dog snatching away her meal, or even attacking and worrying her?

Fifty times did she wish herself a hundred leagues off. How careful she resolved

to be to do nothing that could possibly offend the dog. And so, for the next three or four days, by dint of giving up to him all her best bones, and always jumping down from her cushion whenever he wanted to lie upon it, and looking the picture of humility whenever he was in the room, she contrived to get on in tolerable peace with him. But unluckily, one morning, puss, finding herself all alone in the drawing-room, and everything quiet, and feeling very sleepy (for she had had very little repose the night before, from distress of mind), thought she might as well take the opportunity of getting a nap; so she jumped upon a high footstool, beside the fire, and was soon fast asleep. How long she had napped she could not tell, when she was awakened by a furious barking; and opening her eyes, she saw Viper standing at a little distance, looking as if he was going into fits with passion.

Poor puss! she recollected, all in a moment, that she had got upon Viper's own

footstool! She jumped down before you could count one.

'You audacious little upstart!' cried the dog, as soon as his rage allowed him to speak, 'do you think I shall submit to such impertinent liberties?'

'Indeed, indeed,' stammered the poor cat, 'I humbly beg your lordship's pardon, but I really quite forgot——'

'Forgot, indeed!' roared Viper, 'I'll teach you to forget, Mrs. Puss!' and making a tremendous dash at her, he would doubtless have demolished her in no time, had not, fortunately, the window been open a little, just enough for the cat to get through.

She was on the window-seat in an instant, and had scrambled out of the window before Viper, who was very fat, could come up to her. It was with some difficulty that he got up upon the window-seat, and quite in vain that he tried to squeeze his fat body through the opening of the window. How he growled with disappointed passion, as he

stood on his hind-legs on the window-seat, stretching his head, as far as his little short neck would allow, through the opening, to see what had become of puss.

What *had* become of her? She had dropt down into the street, and had crept into the shade of one of the heavy broad stone-carvings beneath the window, knowing that there she was safe enough for the present; and she lay down, panting with the fright, to recover her breath a little, and consider what was to be done. To go back to the palace was clearly out of the question. But then where could she go? Poor cat! what a perplexity she was in! She lay snug for the best part of an hour before she durst venture out of her hiding-place. At last, cautiously peeping about her, she crept out, and ran, with all her speed, down the street, not knowing in the least whither she was flying. She had not gone far before she attracted the attention of a group of children, who were playing in the street. Shouting, whooping, and laughing, they

pursued her. She redoubled her speed, and darting suddenly down a little side alley, was soon out of sight of her pursuers. She heard their screams and yellings, growing fainter and fainter, in the distance; and feeling that the immediate danger had past, she relaxed her pace, and looked to see where she was. She found that she was in a little, dirty, miserable court, open at the end, through which she saw trees and green fields. But she thought it would be very hazardous to loiter; so she ran on, and in a short time found that she had left the town behind her, and was once more in the open country. Dreading lest she might encounter any more dogs, she carefully avoided approaching any human habitation; so she glided along among the grass, till she came to a small clump of trees, which put her in mind of the forest near her old mistress's hut. Seeing no better prospect of shelter for the night, she climbed up into the largest of the trees, knowing that, at least, she should be out of the way of *dogs* there; and

finding a snug place among the branches in the middle of the tree (for, though it was autumn, yet the leaves were still pretty thick), she made up her mind to pass the night there.

But it wanted some hours yet of night: and what was she to do for supper? It was not at all a pleasant consideration. Moreover, her squabble with Viper had taken place *before* dinner; and now there was no prospect of any supper but such as she could earn by her own exertions. Perhaps she might, with good luck, catch a robin before night; but that could very ill supply the place of the nice bits of fowl, and saucers of rich milk, that Ermengarde gave her every night. However, she was too glad to be safe and snug up in the tree, to be very particular. So she made up her mind to lie there till it grew towards roosting-time, and then see what she could find for supper. She peeped out as well as she could between the branches to see what the surrounding country was like; it all

looked quite wild and lonely, and she saw but few dwellings anywhere near the clump of trees.

Her place of refuge seemed at a considerable distance from the high-road; so she hoped she was tolerably safe from both men and dogs.

At length the cold dews of the evening began to fall, and the little birds began to return home to their trees: so the cat ventured to descend and look about for her supper. I am sorry to say, that being by this time exceedingly hungry, she obeyed the dictates of nature, and in a very few minutes had attacked and devoured a dear little robin, that might have sung merrily all through the autumn, if puss had only been *contented*, and staid quietly at home in the cottage. Be that as it may, poor little Redbreast fell a victim to her hunger, and yet she considered him but a very poor supper, after all. He was the best she could get that night, however; for the other birds proved too nimble for her: so, weary and

hungry, puss climbed up her tree again, and was soon asleep — for she was very tired indeed, with all she had done that day. The next morning, when she awoke, her limbs felt quite stiff; for the night had been frosty, and she was very cold. But there was no fire in the tree; so she had nothing for it but to crawl down, and try to warm herself with catching a bird for her breakfast. She was so benumbed, that she could hardly get down, and her bones ached as if she had got the rheumatism all over her: however, jumping about after the birds revived her by degrees, and she began to feel in a little better spirits; till, spying, at a distance on the high-road, a carriage with a large dog running after it, all her panic returned, and she climbed up into her tree again with all expedition. But the carriage rolled along, and took no notice of puss; and the rumbling of the wheels soon died away, and all was quiet again.

What a melancholy long day it seemed! and, moreover, she could hardly catch a bird

— they all seemed to fly away from the trees, instead of settling upon them; and puss had really hard work to get any dinner at all that day. And then the night was *so* cold again. Many a time when she awoke, and felt the frosty wind whistling round the trees, stripping away more and more of the leaves at every gust, did the poor cat, in her cold and hunger, think of the nice bright fire on her old mistress's hearth, and her brown bread and milk, till she was ready to cry her eyes out with vexation at her own folly — and what was still worse, her own ingratitude — in being willing to leave the good old woman, her best friend, who had taken care of her all her life long, merely because she fancied it would be very grand to live in a palace. People sometimes find out their mistakes when it is too late.

But, to make a long story short — three or four more days and nights — melancholy days, and cold wretched nights — passed over in much the same miserable way, or, rather, things grew worse: for the weather

became stormy, the trees were almost stripped of their leaves, so that they scarcely afforded her any shelter from the wind, and the cat was so dreadfully cold!

It became still more difficult, too, to procure any food; and the birds became very shy of venturing within her reach: the poor cat did not know what to do — she was really half dead with cold and hunger!

'Oh!' groaned she, stretching herself out upon some of the fallen leaves at the foot of the tree — 'Oh, that I had never listened to that deceitful, mischievous magpie!'

And, indeed, she had good cause to say so.

It was drawing towards sunset; there had been several storms during the day, but, as the evening came on, the weather had a little cleared up; and a gleam of sunshine just then shot out from among the black clouds, and fell upon something glittering beside her.

She lifted her eyes languidly, for she had no strength to be alert now, and saw the

bright and beautiful Fairy, with her car drawn by the silver pheasants.

'Have you learnt yet to be contented with plain fare at home?' said the Fairy to the cat, with an expression in her countenance that the cat could hardly make out: she did not know whether her strange visitor meant to be kind or not to her.

'Oh! if you would but take me back to my old mistress again!' cried the poor cat, clasping her paws in an agony of entreaty, 'I would never be discontented any more!'

The Fairy smiled, and touching her lightly with her silver wand, bade her close her eyes — another moment, and she bade her open them; and, most wonderful of all the wonderful things that had happened to her, the trees, the country, the distant city, all were gone! There was a charming log-fire on the hearth, sparkling and crackling; whirr, whirr, whirr, went the old woman's wheel, and there she sate in her chair just as usual; and the wind was blowing, and the rain was pelting against the shutters,

exactly as it did the very night puss had left the cottage in such a mysterious way. In fact, everything looked *precisely* the same. The cat rubbed her eyes, but nothing could she see of the Fairy, or the car, or the silver pheasants.

However, had she got back, and so quick too? And the old woman did not seem at all surprised to see her — it was very odd. She could not make it out anyhow: at last it struck her that, perhaps, she might have been dreaming, and never have been out of the hut at all. Yet those terrible growls of Viper's, and those dismal days and nights in the trees — no, they *must* have been real! Still, it was very strange that the old woman should take no more notice of her, if she had been lost — how could it be? It was really unaccountable.

But her perplexities were interrupted by the cheerful voice of her old mistress calling out, 'Come, my pussy! it is supper-time!' and as she spoke, she rose up from her spinning-wheel, and taking down some eggs

and a cake of brown bread, with a large jug, from her corner cupboard, she broke the eggs into the frying-pan, and they were soon hissing and sputtering over the fire. Then she placed a large saucer on the table, and broke some bread into it; and returning to the fire, she took off the frying-pan, and emptied the eggs into a dish on the table, and sat down to her supper. But before she tasted a bit herself, she poured some nice goat's milk over the bread in a saucer, and set it down on the hearth before the cat.

Now I will venture to say, puss never ate a meal in her life half so thankfully before. She made a resolution, between every mouthful, never to say one word to that silly chattering magpie again; and never to indulge in any more foolish wishes, but to stay at home, do her duty in catching her mistress's mice, and be contented, and thankful for the brown bread and milk, without troubling her head about countesses and buttered crumpets any more.

And I am happy to be able to tell you

that she faithfully kept her resolution. She never spoke to the magpie afterwards; but contracted a steady friendship with the owl, which lasted to the day of his death; and when he did die, which was not till he had attained a venerable old age, he bequeathed to her his share of the mice that infested the neighborhood of the cottage.

As to the magpie, finding that her company was no longer desired in that part of the world, she very wisely took her flight far away to the other side of the wood.

Whether she still lives there, and goes on chattering about the grand things she used to see in the palace of the Countess Von Rustenfustenmustencrustenberg, is more than I can inform you. If you want to ascertain that fact, you must go to the northern part of the Duchy of Kittencorkenstringen, and then you must walk seventeen leagues and three quarters still further north, and then you must turn off to your right, just where you see the old fir-stump with the rook's nest in it; and then you must walk eleven

leagues and a quarter more, and then turn to your left, and after you have kept straight on for about fifteen leagues more, you will see the wood where the magpie lives; — and then, if you walk quite through it to the other side, you will see the old woman's cottage; and if it should happen to be a fine day, I dare say you will see her sitting in the sunshine spinning, and, curled round beside her, the contented cat.

THE WISHING-DAY.

Long, long ago, in the glorious reign of King Huggermuggerus, there lived in an ancient castle a highly respectable cat and his wife. They led a very comfortable life of it, for the castle belonged to an old baron who kept very little company, and was very fond of his cats: so it was very rarely that any strange dogs were admitted within the walls; and the cats breakfasted every morning with their master. They had only two children; all the rest of their numerous family having been barbarously drowned by the housekeeper, who was a very cross old woman, and did not like cats, nor anything else very much. But the cats did not trouble their heads much about her; in fact, they had very little to do with her, for they were allowed full liberty to wander about the castle at their pleasure.

It was a delightful old castle, full of such queer odd nooks and corners, that one might have been lost in it for days together; and there were long corridors, in which the kittens used to run races on moonlight nights, when the old housekeeper was safe in bed, and make such a racket, it would have done your heart good to hear them. But they chiefly took possession of a charming old room, hung with tapestry representing all sorts of strange things, and very convenient for the two kittens to play at hide-and-seek behind it; and as the room faced the south, they got all the sun to warm them. The elder of them was called *Wishie*, the younger *Contenta*. Their papa and mamma had given them these names, because Wishie was always saying she wished she had this, and she wished she had that, and never seemed satisfied unless she had everything she mewed for: while Contenta, on the contrary, was of the sweetest disposition in the world, and always pleased with what was given to her. One would

have thought that neither of them could have had anything to wish for; for they had plenty to eat and drink — nice long galleries to run about in — no dogs or children to tease them — and a garden with many tall trees, and abundance of sparrows. What could they want besides?

One bright summer-day, the sun was shining splendidly — the flowers were in full bloom — the air was laden with sweet scents from the honey-suckles and moss-roses, and the larks were singing away high up in the sky, as merry as if they had all gone out for a holiday, when Wishie took it into her head to have a stroll in the garden. Now, it so happened that Contenta, who had been keeping the baron company at his breakfast, had carried off into the garden a very nice chicken-bone which her master had given her. So she sat down under a rose-tree to eat it. But she did not remain there long before Wishie spied her out. 'Well, to be sure!' exclaimed she to her herself, as she drew near the rose-bush,

'What a bone Contenta has got there! She has been breakfasting with our master, that's very clear. I'm sure nobody ever gives *me* such great bones! I wish Contenta would let me have a bit of it—;' and so saying, she threw herself down beside her sister, pretending to look very tired and hungry, and whined out, 'Do, Contenta, give me a bit! I am so hungry!'

'Willingly,' replied Contenta, who was very good-natured; 'but have you had no breakfast, Wishie, this morning?'

'O, nothing to speak of,' said Wishie, falling tooth and claw upon the bone; and in a very few minutes she had devoured by far the largest share of it. Now, I don't mean to say that Contenta was such an unnaturally amiable cat, as to be exactly well pleased to see her breakfast disappear in such a wholesale fashion; but she consoled herself with reflecting, that dinner would come some time or other; and being, as I said, very good-natured, she made Wishie very welcome to the bone, and

began frisking after the leaves upon the gravel-walk. I am sorry to say, that when Wishie had devoured the chicken-bone, she did not seem half so much ashamed of her selfish conduct as she ought to have been; but, seeing a fine plump little sparrow perch himself upon the branch of an old tree near, she sprung up the stem after him. Now it was really very greedy of her, but however she *did* it, and some wonderful things happened in consequence. The tree was very old, and the trunk was quite hollow; but that Wishie did not know; so when she had clambered up to the top she suddenly found herself on the brink of a frightful abyss — there seemed a hollow deep down to the very roots of the tree. She peeped cautiously down to see what she could see, but somehow or other, whether she overbalanced herself, or whether a bit of the bark gave way, or how it was I can't tell, but Wishie tipped over, and tumbled headlong into the hollow of the tree. But as she luckily fell into a bed of

thick moss she was not the worse; and giving herself a shake, she opened her eyes and looked about her.

Was there ever anything so wonderful? She was in an enormous hall, supported upon at least two hundred columns of gold, while, between them, curtains of the richest white silk, fringed with pearls and diamonds, hung from the roof to the floor, which was spread with a carpet of azure, covered with flowers in their natural colors, intermingled with stars of gold and silver. The roof of this wondrous hall was of fretted gold, and from the centre hung a lamp formed of an enormous precious stone, which shed forth rays of many-colored hues. At the upper end of the apartment was a chair of state, over which fell a drapery of azure velvet, embroidered with pearls in beautiful devices. But how shall I describe to you the lady who sat in this gorgeous chair? She was bright and beautiful as a summer's day; her hair, shining like gold, fell in curls to the very ground; she was

dressed in a robe of azure-blue, a crown of white roses, sprinkled with diamond dew-drops, rested upon her brow, and in her hand she carried a long slender bright wand of gold. You may imagine that Wishie was very much astounded at the sight of all these strange things; however, the Fairy, in a very soft voice, called to her to approach nearer. 'Wishie,' said she, 'do you know where you are?'

'Not the least bit in the world, please your ladyship,' replied Wishie; 'how should I? Who would ever have thought there was such a grand place as this under ground?'

'Never mind its being under ground, Wishie,' said the Fairy, 'that's no concern of your's; attend to what I am going to say to you. You are very fond of *wishing*, are you not?' Wishie made no answer, for she felt rather ashamed; and the Fairy continued: 'I advise you, Wishie, as your friend, to give up such a bad trick, you will find it very inconvenient some day or other.'

By this time Wishie's fright was a little gone off; and being always rather pertly inclined, she plucked up courage, and remarked that she did not see how it was to hurt her. Now it was very rude in a little good-for-nothing kitten like Wishie, to speak so saucily; and the Fairy looked very angry, as well she might; however, she only said, 'You will know better, perhaps, at some other time. Hear me, Wishie, I am going to bestow a wonderful gift upon you; for this day you shall have everything you wish for. But I warn you, that should any of your wishes bring you into trouble, you must abide by the consequences, you cannot undo it.' As the Fairy said this, she lightly touched Wishie with the end of her wand, and the kitten instantly found herself again in the castle, in the old room hung with tapestry, and her mother purring by the fire-side. Wishie was too full of her adventure to keep it another minute to herself; so, running up to her mother, she related it at great length.

'Nonsense, child,' said the old cat, 'you don't think I shall believe such absurd stuff, do you?' I'll box your ears for telling stories—' and she gave Wishie such a hearty cuff with her paw, that she sent her spinning into the great gallery, to amuse herself as she best could.

How dreadfully cross my old mother is to-day; thought Wishie to herself, as she scampered up the corridor; however, I must try and find something to do here—it's very dull being all by oneself. Just then, as she drew near one of the windows, she heard a great buzzing and fluttering, and looking up, saw a large wasp dancing about in the sunshine. Wishie thought it would be very good fun to try and catch him, so she made several springs at the window, but all in vain; the wasp was as young and active as she was, and eluded her very nimbly. Quite out of breath, she paused for a minute to look at him.

'O how I wish I could catch you, master wasp!' she exclaimed, giving a final jump with all her might.

Strange to say, this time the wasp seemed almost to drop into her claws; she clutched him with such a tight grasp, that he had no possibility of escape; but in an instant, with a direful scream, Wishie unclosed her paw; and the wasp dropped on the floor. Wishie's paw was terribly stung. Her first trial of the Fairy's gift had not proved pleasant by any means. So, limping and mewing, Wishie went back to her mother, who scolded her well for her folly in jumping at the wasp, when she ought to have been minding her duty and catching the mice; and after licking the wounded paw, the old cat sent her to bed for the rest of the day. But Wishie had no intention whatever of spending her day in such a manner as that. Lie in bed, indeed! not she. So she licked her paw till the pain was somewhat abated, and then she crawled slily upstairs into the great gallery. There was nobody there, except the knights and ladies in the picture-frames, the baron's ancestors, and a grim looking set they were; and as none of them

showed any desire to come down from the walls to play with her, Wishie very soon got tired of looking at them. So, seeing a door open at the end of the corridor, she stole quietly in, and found herself in one of the state apartments of the castle. It was a grand room, hung with beautiful tapestry, and full of a great many curious things, the use of which Wishie could not imagine. Among other things, there was a magnificent cabinet, and, on one of the shelves, a pretty round ball of carved ivory, that looked just as if it was made on purpose to roll along upon the floor, and be run after. And such a large room, too, it was; the ball would roll about so splendidly.

'Oh!' exclaimed Wishie, 'you pretty ball, I do wish I had you to play with!'

Bounce came the ball upon the floor, and in another moment, it had rolled quite to the other end of the room, with Wishie after it, but it would not suffer her to touch it; just as she came up to it, up it jumped, dashed high up in the air, over the chairs

and tables, and then descending again on the floor, was here and there and everywhere, all in a minute; Wishie scampering after it, and absolutely screaming with delight. Up flew the ball — up to the very ceiling; then down it came with a rattle against some fine old china on the top of the cabinet, and in an instant, bowls, jars, and tea-pots, were all lying on the floor, broken to pieces. Dear me! thought Wishie, this is rather too much of a good thing; if the old housekeeper should come in!

But the mad ball never stopped to think about the housekeeper; now it took a long roll upon the floor, as if to entice Wishie to run after it; then, suddenly darting up, would hurl itself with all its might, against one of the grim old pictures; Wishie, who had by this time quite forgotten the pain of her paw, jumping as high as ever she could reach after it. It really was something like a game at play! Just then, bounce it went against a superb mirror at the upper end of

the room, shivering it to atoms; but not a whit did the ball care for that — with a tremendous spring, it cleared the whole length of the room, and alighted on one of the picture-frames near the door.

But Wishie was getting much too frightened now to enjoy the fun any longer: she stood, gazing with rueful looks at the broken mirror — O if the cross old housekeeper should find it out! She thought the best plan would be to steal out of the room, but on turning round, she perceived that the door had become most unaccountably shut — there was no getting out. What was to be done? While she was turning it over in her mind, down came the ball directly upon Wishie's tail, with such a thump! Wishie thought her poor tail must be utterly demolished — she heard an odd sort of chuckling laugh up in the air, and, looking up, saw that the ball had seated itself, very quietly, in its old place on the top of the cabinet. How her tail smarted! it was worse a great deal than the sting. She was

just trying to curl it round to lick it, when the door opened, and in came the housekeeper! She had not advanced many steps when the broken china caught her eye; her back was towards the mirror, so she did not see *that* — but she *did* see Wishie, and exclaiming, 'You naughty little kitten, you have been throwing down the china!' She flew towards Wishie, and if she could have caught her, would, no doubt, have given her a dreadful whipping; but, as she had luckily left the door open, Wishie contrived to slip past her, and dart out of the room. When the housekeeper turned round, she spied the broken mirror; which put her into such a consternation, that, for a few minutes, she was really too much thunderstruck to run after Wishie. And there sate the ball on the cabinet, very quietly, and nobody ever suspected it.

It was lucky for Wishie that she gained a few minutes on the housekeeper, for by that means, making the best use of her time, she flew along the gallery, down the

staircase, and jumping out of an open window, was safely hidden among the shrubs in the garden, before her enemy had descended the stairs. Poor Wishie! the pain in her tail was terrible; and she dared not go to her mother, to tell her misfortunes, for she knew that if she did, her mother would be sure to cuff her soundly. So she lay still under the bushes, licking her tail, and trying to forget her troubles as well as she could. Evening came on; the sun was low in the heavens, and the little birds, that had set out in the morning full of glee, came back merrily to their nests, and made themselves comfortable for the night: it was clear they had had a very happy day of it, though very likely not all they wished for. Wishie sighed as she listened to their cheerful chirpings. By and bye she began to feel very hungry, and she thought if she could find Contenta, she could beg a bit of her supper, for, of course, nobody else would give her any. So she crawled out of the bushes, and stole into the court-yard. No

one was about; all was quite still: she crept along under the house till she reached the place where the cats' supper was always put out for them on the top of a flat stone. Her papa and mamma, and Contenta, had certainly finished their supper, but they had remembered Wishie, and very good-naturedly left her some in the dish; so that she really made a very good supper, better than she deserved a great deal. Having accomplished this important point, she thought, as all seemed so quiet, she might venture into the house.

The great door, which opened into the court-yard, had been left ajar, so she crept in, and peeped into the hall. No one was there; it was getting dusk: the old knights and ladies who hung against the walls of the great hall, looked down upon her so gloomily, that she began to wonder whether they meant to jump upon the floor and give her a beating. However, they staid quietly in their black frames, and Wishie crept on, and on, shaking all over for fear she should

meet anybody, till seeing the door of the baron's dining-hall wide open, she ventured in. The room was empty; the baron's dinner had been over hours ago; there seemed no fear of any one coming, so she grew bolder and jumped upon one of the window-seats to consider what she should do with herself all night. But before she had settled that point, she began to grow rather thirsty, and (quite forgetting that she had already had a very good supper, and that Contenta had left her her full share of the milk that was put out for them every night), being naturally of a very greedy disposition, she thought how nice a great dish full of cream would be.

Now it so happened, that close by the window-seat on which she had stationed herself, there stood on the floor a huge old china punch-bowl, which was never used except on very great occasions, such as a marriage in the baron's family, and the like. Many a long year it was since that bowl had ever been used! there it stood, half-covered with

cobwebs; but the housekeeper came and dusted it sometimes. Well; Wishie's eye just then fell on the great bowl.

'What a quantity of cream it would hold!' she exclaimed; 'how nice it would be to have it to lap whenever I liked! I do wish it was full of nice thick cream, like that the baron has for breakfast!'

Wishie had hardly said it, when something began bubbling up, very gently, as if it was very soft, from the bottom of the bowl, and in a few minutes there floated at her feet, a perfect white sea! an ocean of cream — smooth, delicious, and tempting. It was so conveniently close to the window-sill, too, that by planting her fore-paws on the rim of the bowl, she could stoop down and lap so comfortably! At least she thought so at first; but somehow, when she came to try, the china was so thin and so slippery, that she found she could get very little hold. It was very provoking. But she tried a second time; really, it was *dreadfully* slippery, and there was nothing that she could

stick her claws into — however, she did at last contrive to get her tongue just to the top of the cream; but she had scarcely tasted it, when suddenly her paws shot apart, and she tumbled headlong into the bowl! The bowl was deep and wide, and there was nothing for her to cling to, to help herself out by. O, what a splashing and spluttering she made! but it did her no good; the cream got into her eyes, her mouth, her nostrils, and she could not anyhow lift herself out of it — there she must stay, coughing, choking, and struggling, till she was drowned. Wishie thought she had quite enough cream! But just as she was sinking down, quite exhausted with her useless efforts, she felt her neck seized, and that some one was drawing her out of the bowl. The next minute she was laid safe and sound on the floor. It was some little time before she could open her eyes, and when she did so, she was exceedingly astonished to see, by the waning light, the beautiful lady with the golden locks and crown of white roses, and glittering dew-drops.

'Well, Wishie,' said the Fairy, 'have you had a pleasant day of it? You have had everything you wished for, I think?'

'O dear, ma'am!' replied Wishie, shaking her ears to get the cream out, 'I never had such a miserable day in my life! I have met with such dreadful misfortunes!'

'Then,' said the Fairy, 'you think that your day would have been a happier one, if you had *not* had everything you fancied you should like?'

Wishie hung her head down, and looked very silly; and at last answered that 'she thought it would.'

'I am quite of that opinion,' replied the Fairy; 'and, as you seem by this time to have had pretty plain proofs of the folly of *wishing*, I will take away my dangerous gift from you; for I hope you will be wiser now than you have ever been before.' So saying, the Fairy gave her a stroke with her wand, and Wishie directly found herself in her own little bed, by the side of her sister Contenta, who was sound asleep. And in a

minute Wishie fell asleep too, and never awoke till the sun was shining in at the windows. She told all her strange adventures to her father and mother and Contenta; upon which they all held up their paws, and declared they had never heard anything so wonderful. But her father and mother scolded her also, and told her it was all her own fault, which Wishie felt was too true; and, from that day forwards, she never mewed for anything, but became as satisfied and good-humored as Contenta herself; and even the housekeeper at last grew quite fond of her.

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